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If the managers of free schools would, by confining their instruction to reading, writing, &c., enlighten the children's minds, and give them the materials for thinking, without directing in what particular manner they are to think, and leave the parents at liberty to have their children instructed in creeds and catechisms in whatever form they please, more good may be expected to result from free schools, than if the managers, by attempting to do too much, gave the people reason to fear that there was a design to adopt the illiberal plan of education pursued in the charter schools.\* Y.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

REPORT UPON THE CHARITABLE AND  
BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. READ  
AT A PUBLIC SITTING OF THE AKA-  
DEMIE DE MARSEILLES, AUGUST 28,  
1808, BY DR. LOUIS VALENTINE.

IN two preceding fragments, I have sketched the state and progress of the natural and physical sciences in the United States of America. I shall now have the honour to address you on the subject of the prisons and hospitals, and the state of the poor of that country, and the hospitality which characterizes its inhabitants.

BEGGARS.—Paupers are unknown in North America and almost in every maritime province of the new world. From the establishment of their first colonies in the year 1620, to 1630, the Americans studied the means to prevent mendicity and to stifle this evil in its birth. In proportion as the population increased and the unfortunate emigrants restored there, it was necessary to find resources, for those who could not obtain imme-

iate employment, or who were incapable through age or infirmities, of maintaining themselves by labour.

It is not surprising that beggary should be still less known in the more southern provinces (except in some Spanish possessions in the interior,) and not at all in the Antilles; that affluence which the Europeans who settled there soon diffused, and which has been continually increasing, the facility with which employment of every kind may be obtained, the nature of the climate, which, in many parts renders the clothing there unnecessary which is indispensable in the North; and in short, that hospitality which characterizes the colonists, are all powerful preventatives against this evil.

It is, however, much more difficult to be avoided by the Anglo-Americans, especially in the five States of the North, which are called New-England. The severity of the climate, the inferiority of the soil, the dearth of resources, and the frequent incursions made by the Indians to recover and keep possession of their native land, cannot fail to create poverty and its attendant evils, as they exist in Europe.

The spirit of toleration and philanthropy which has pervaded every religious sect of the American States, since they established their independence; the strict attention paid to the morals of youth, as well as to their agricultural and commercial education; the facility with which the labouring class finds employment, either in tilling the lands in the West, or in erecting buildings; the extreme moderation of the land-tax, and the equal partition of their other taxes, act as general preservatives against mendicity. They cannot, however always prevent indigence: philanthropic associations and charitable institutions have therefore been formed, free of expence to the federal government, for the relief

\* For some suitable resolutions at Limerick on this subject, the reader is referred to the documents.

of the widow, the orphan, the sick, the infirm stranger, and those who have suffered shipwreck or lost their property by fire. These benevolent societies are become sufficiently numerous to provide for every want. Every sect, also, furnishes a quota towards the relief of its poor.

All large towns, and populous places, have an institution called, *almshouse* or *poor-house*, where different work-shops are established. The lightest and easiest employments of the poor, consist in cleaning horse-hair, carding cotton, untwisting old cables, and preparing hemp for the navy. The sick are lodged in a separate apartment. In consequence of these regulations, you do not meet with a single pauper in this part of America: the eye is not disgusted, as in Europe, by the sight of wretched objects, covered with rags, who at every step implore the compassion of the passenger; or by vagabonds, who, under the mask of poverty, audaciously introduce themselves into houses, to abuse the confidence and charity of the benevolent. The peasant and the inhabitant of the city are clothed alike: the dress of all classes is simple, and always neat.

Thus the descendants of the English, have in a short space of time, and with fewer resources, done, what their mother country has never been able to effect. They have gone still farther, as we shall find when we speak of the regulations of their prisons. We are not ignorant that there exist numerous beggars in the united kingdom of Great Britain, yet in addition to the frequent benefactions of individuals, and numerous charitable associations, government has instituted a tax for the poor.

The suppression of paupers has long been wished for in France, and to obtain this end, not only academies, but several individuals have proposed methods, and presented plans,

which appear to be more or less efficacious. This great object may be effect whenever we please: what citizen would not willingly contribute his aid by paying a small annual sum? Under a vigorous administration like ours, we may hope that the vigilance and active zeal of those intelligent magistrates who govern the various departments, will ere long put an end to this pest, so destructive to society. Some partial attempts have already answered the public wish, and produced salutary effects. Have we not seen Thomson the American, now Count Rumford, contrary to all expectations, banish in twenty-four hours mendicity from Bavaria, and establish in its place useful manufactures.

**PRISONS.**--Those acts which do most honour to some of the federal states in America, are, the reform of the penal code; converting prisons into houses of industry; and making culprits useful mechanics, who after having fulfilled the condition imposed on them, are again admitted into the bosom of society. The state of Pennsylvania first set the example: it was followed by that of New York, and latterly by the states of Virginia, and Massachuset. The prison at Philadelphia has been established seventeen years; that of New York, twelve; and experience has crowned both with the greatest success.

The Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, and Mr. Turnbull, who visited the prison at Philadelphia in the years 1795 and 1796, published interesting memorials; that of the latter gentleman, has been translated into French, by Dr. Petit Radel. What we have ourselves since seen, with the exception of certain ameliorations perfectly agrees with what they have said, and we refer those who wish for more ample details to those accounts.

This noble work of philanthropy was executed at the instigation of the Quakers,\* their society has the direction of the prisons in the two first cities; and Dr. B. Rush, had a great share in promoting their establishment. His work, entitled '*Researches on the Effect of Public Punishment on Criminals and Society,*' produced a great sensation in the public mind.

One of the most learned juris-consults, William Bradford, who at that time was advocate-general of the United States, was one of the first who embraced the new principles of the society of friends. He had to fight against the judges, who were averse to any change in the regulations of the prisons, which were to form the basis of the criminal code. The system of the virtuous and intrepid Howard, the immortal work of Beccaria, which people were contented to admire in theory, and latterly that of Sir Morton Eden, will no longer be esteemed visionary, since they have been consecrated in principles, and adopted by four legislatures. The last that have put them in practise, have made certain modifications. The southern states, where slavery exists in full force, will find much greater difficulty in submitting to

them. Nevertheless the *Penitentiary* (house of correction) at Richmond, the capital of Virginia, is an establishment of this nature.

The legislature of Pennsylvania, has abolished the punishment of death for every crime, except that of atrocious murder. That of New York has included in this exception, money-coiners and persons guilty of forgery. The object of punishment, is the amendment of the culprit; to induce him by every means to repent, to abandon his former evil habits, and by labour, to make a full restitution to society. To effect this purpose various methods have been tried, the influence of which is sufficiently known to the physician, the physiologist, and the observer of human nature.

These means are, first, being locked in a cell, which is called *solitary confinement*, and being subjected to a certain dietetic regimen, and to observe silence; second, the admission of the criminal to labour, for which there are work-shops divided into classes; the judicious application of certain maxims calculated to impress man with a sense of his native dignity, and the necessity of the labour imposed on each person; fourth, the responsibility for the produce of this labour; fifth, the extreme regularity of those duties which relate to general and individual cleanliness; sixth, the regulation of meals, of retirement, and of rest; seventh, religious worship.

This administration is founded solely on principles of humanity. It is intrusted to inspectors, (of whom there are twelve in Philadelphia) a jailor, a turnkey, jailors' assistants, and a clerk. The cook, as well as all the servants are convicts. Every species of retribution and exaction is forbidden. No gifts are ever accepted from visitors. The assistants and all the functionaries of the inc-

\* Note by the Editor of the *Philanthropist.*

That many members of the religious society, called Quakers, in both cities, have been zealous promoters of the institutions alluded to, is unquestionable; and may be partly accounted for by the leisure which their peculiar habits and scruples afford: but that they, as a society, have ever had the direction of those institutions; or that as individuals, they are entitled to any merit, exclusively of many of their benevolent fellow citizens, is as certainly erroneous. The assertion must have arisen from the misinformation, to which the well-meaning author was exposed in this, and in some other parts of his description of the United States; and particularly in those respecting mendicity.

rior, whose morals may be trusted, are not allowed to approach a prisoner with an offensive weapon, not even with a stick, nor yet a dog. Menaces, reproaches, invectives, and every kind of ill treatment, are rigorously prohibited.

It would be difficult to form an idea of the admirable order that reigns in these places, which we should rather take for convents converted into manufactories than prisons. Every precaution is taken for the general security, and to prevent the evasion of the prisoners. The work-shops are kept in constant activity. They are occupied by weavers, tailors, shoe-makers, joiners, turners, watch-makers, nailers, iron-mongers, and stone-masons. You likewise see some who prepare plaster, and others who plane shavings for dyeing.

Who could imagine that absolute silence is maintained in these manufactories. The convicts never cry, laugh, or sing, and will not answer the questions of visitors. They are only permitted to address each other when they are in want of tools. I made the trial at the nailery, which is the most considerable and productive manufactory, in presence of an assistant who accompanied me, but no workman answered the questions I put. Some of these convicts have acknowledged, that they would rather suffer death than be condemned to silence and labour. Whoever should refuse to conform to these rules, or disturb the order established, would be confined in a solitary cell, and subject to a peculiar diet, which generally consists of Indian corn flour, boiled with treacle and water. He would also lose his share of the produce of the manufactories, and the expenses incurred during his suspension, would be deducted.

**Female convicts have no com-**

munication with the men, and the regimen observed with them, is somewhat different. It was not judged necessary to prohibit their speaking. Their occupations consist of sewing, preparing hemp, flax and cotton, in carding, spinning, &c.

Those culprits on whom sentence has not yet been passed, are placed apart from the convicts, and have no intercourse with them.

In the prison at New-York, the men are clothed in woollen of two colours, that is to say, one side of the body and of the extremities of the coat is black, the other red. Their cap also is of two colours. All their clothes are manufactured in the prisons.

The product of the labour of the convicts, is appropriated to defray the costs of the prosecution, reimburse the effects stolen, pay a fine for the profit of the state, provide food, clothing, tools and wages for the assistants employed, and in maintaining the household establishment.\* The public treasury advances money to defray these expenses, and the local government frequently remits the fine.

At Philadelphia, the prisoners can obtain their freedom after a certain number of years. When they have, by labour and good conduct, effaced the infamy which attaches to them, and which elsewhere would have been punished with death, the inspectors can obtain their pardon and their release. There is another class of convicts at New-York, who are condemned to perpetual seclusion.

The labour of some of the con-

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\* By late accounts it appears that all these effects are not realized. The produce of the labour of the convicts is barely sufficient for their maintenance. There is no retribution to the persons whom they have injured.

*Editor.*

victs is so productive, that they are enabled to send money to their families. When the inspectors have defrayed the above mentioned expenses, they make the prisoners acquainted with the amount, and the net surplus of the produce of the sale of the article.

It will be asked, how can wretches blackened with numerous crimes, in a few years be converted to virtue? How far may their promises of amendment be relied on? What security can they give society for their future good conduct? Is it not almost a certainty, from a more or less profound knowledge of the human heart, that they will fall into the same vices? These objections have been obviated, and experiences stronger than argument, has already decided in favour of the new system.

The comparative tables, drawn up since the last alterations made in the penal code, prove that crimes have diminished nearly half in number, and that a very few criminals have been condemned for a relapse.\*

It is but just to state, that there are very few Americans among the convicts. I was informed, that in

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\* Several facts prove the salutary effects produced on the morals of the prisoners. A criminal of the most hardened nature, who had infested the environs of Philadelphia several years before the change in the penal code took place, being dismissed, thus addressed one of the Inspectors: "I thank you, for the care you have taken of me ever since I have been here, and for having enabled me to fulfil a duty I owe to society. You know what my conduct has been, and whether it has atoned for my past offences: but I am now at liberty, and consequently all I could say, would be of little service to me. Pursue your plans, and you will neither have thieves nor pick-pockets; with respect to myself, be assured, you will never see me here again."—The man kept his word.

*Turnbull.*

1807, there were about 480 culprits in the prison at New-York, of whom only 30 or 40 were Americans; all the rest were foreigners, and chiefly natives of Ireland.†

It is generally known, that in those countries where education is most an object of attention, fewer crimes are committed. For this reason, there are always fewer criminals in Scotland, than in Ireland and England, placing all other things on an equality.

*Hospitals*—There are very few hospitals in the United States. Many of the cities or small towns have none at all; others only have them for the sailors. They are generally esteemed evils. Some are only temporary, when the epidemical diseases of summer and autumn prevail. They cost nothing to the federal government, each state contributes to defray their expenses, but they are supported by societies, subscriptions, occasional benefactions, and legacies.

As in Europe, experience has proved, that large hospitals are always more pernicious than useful, and that hospitals on a smaller scale are preferable. They have been careful in the United States to avoid the first inconvenience, so that each ward contains only a small number of sick. The largest of these establishments, which are well worthy of observation, are those at Philadelphia and New-York.‡

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† A letter from New-York in our last number, corrects this error, and disproves the fact of so large a proportion of the convicts being from Ireland. *Editor.*

‡ Students of medicine and surgery, who attend the colleges and universities, hear clinical lectures in the hospitals of these two cities, on the different diseases which are there treated. They learn, as in Europe, by the dissection of dead bodies, to discover the various affections and causes by which death has been occasioned; it is

Medical attendance here, as in England, is gratuitous; there are

there they obtain solid instruction. There is also a library for their use.

Inclosed and airy grounds afford walks for the patients, as well as serve for the culture of alimentary and medicinal herbs. These are likewise to be found at the *almshouse* at Philadelphia. I have been told that an excellent establishment of a similar kind has lately been formed at Boston.

The governors of the hospitals annually give an account of their situation, to the legislature of their respective states. This rule is strictly observed at New York. According to the report given by the governors of the hospital at New York to the legislature of that state, sitting at Albany, in 1801, we find that 1346 patients were received in that asylum, 159 of whom died; that 575 of these patients were Americans, and the rest were foreigners. Among the latter there were 427 subjects of Great Britain. It is remarkable that the latter, every year, have been the most numerous of the Europeans. During the preceding eight years, 4922 invalids have been received, 1201, (or nearly the fourth part,) of whom were afflicted with syphilitic disorders, and 215 by mental derangement: 4056 went out, 1815 of whom were citizens of the United States; the rest belonging to various other countries. Consequently, more than half of the patients received in the hospital at New York are foreigners. It is not only in hospitals that the diseases of persons who have died, are registered; this rule extends also to the capital cities, and will probably be followed by the others. We shall again cite New York. The municipal council of that city has made a regulation, by which physicians and surgeons are required, under pain of paying a fine of fifty dollars, to leave a certificate with some person belonging to the house, or the family of the person deceased, to specify his name, his apparent age, and the nature of the malady or of the accident, which occasioned his death. The same regulation is observed with the sacristans or clerks of churches, who are fined twenty five dollars, if they do not refuse interment, should not this certificate be presented with the corps. But when a physician or surgeon has not been employed, a similar certificate must be signed and delivered by some one of the family.

Every sacristan or person who has the

also dispensaries established upon the same plan.

care of the tombs of the church-yards, is obliged under the same penalty, to present a weekly list to the inspector, who superintends the city police, of all persons who have died, designating their name, sex, age, the place of their birth, the time of their death, the malady of which they died, and other particulars which may be useful.

Since the year 1801, the inspectors of the city has inserted a weekly list of the deaths in the public papers. I find by examining these bills of mortality, drawn by my friend Dr. Mitchell (a senator) during the years 1804 1805, and 1806, that pulmonary consumption causes a fifth part of the mortality: for within three years, 6641 persons died at New York, among whom there were 1315 whose complaints were pulmonary (in 1805 the population of New York amounted to more than 70,000 inhabitants; in 1808, it was estimated at 90,000.) In examining the bills of mortality of several towns of the Northern States, it is also proved that pulmonary consumption generally carries off a fifth part of those who die.

At Philadelphia, where the population is nearly the same as at New York, from the 2d of January 1807, to January 2, 1808, the bill of mortality included 2045 persons, of whom 183 children died of cholera, 98 of convulsions, 44 of hydrocephalus, and 55 of croup; 30 adults or old men died of apoplexy; but 306 persons of all ages died of consumption, among whom we count 51 from the age of 20 to 30; 86 from 30 to 40; and 54 from 40 to 50 years of age. Of this number we reckon only about a sixth this year.

We find likewise by the same bills of 1804, 1805, and 1806, that there were 51 suicides committed at New-York. This affection of the mind, which urges man to destroy himself, begins to excite the public attention in the principal cities, where luxury and gaming have made great progress.

Great mortality prevails among children before they attain the age of two years; almost a third die of the flux, convulsions, quinsies, and especially of the croup. The physicians of the United States are, however, much more successful in their treatment of the latter disease; when it is taken in time, and proper remedies can be applied, only one patient in ten die of this insidious malady.

*Hospitality.*—Every foreigner who travels through the United States, especially in countries distant from the maritime towns, cannot help reflecting on the happiness of simple men, living amid the abundance of primitive things.\*

Hospitality is the characteristic national trait of the native American, and is nearly as much so among the civilized inhabitants. You also find it exercised among several Indian tribes on the frontiers. When an European has smoked in the calumet of one of their natives, he is as safe as the traveller who has eaten salt with an Arab of the desert, or slept under his tent. This ancient virtue, which *Mr. De Lisle de Sales* calls the *point of honour of the primitive ages*, might furnish matter among the Americans for many anecdotes, calculated to reconcile the misanthrope with human nature. If a traveller applies to an inhabitant for any thing necessary to his subsistence or his comfort, and offers him money, he is often told, "We are not accustomed to make people pay for the pleasure they afford us." We will conclude by relating an ever memorable example of the sublime virtue by which the North Americans are distinguished. It is too honourable to human nature in general, and to those people in particular, not to be commemorated. Allow me, therefore, to avail myself of this opportunity to pay my just tribute of homage, as I was witness to the hospitality which excited the grateful admiration of all virtuous

Frenchmen, and the particulars are too little known. Some poets would find in them a subject worthy of their pen. During the state of anarchy in which our colonies were thrown by the dreadful shock of the revolution, many colonists only found a safe asylum in the United States. The inhabitants of St Domingo, who were the most numerous and the most unfortunate, exposed to all the horrors of anarchy and civil war, after seeing their property fall a prey to the flames, and themselves left destitute and pursued on every side, endeavoured to escape from fire and sword, by taking refuge on board of ships. But all had not the good fortune to reach the vessels.\*

After the catastrophe of the Cape,

\* It was only after passing thirteen hours of agony away from home, that I escaped, as it were, by miracle, from the sword of assassins and from Cape Francois, amid a volley of shot. Obliged to take a circuitous road, I had many obstacles to surmount before I reached the coast, in traversing the mountains, exposed to the fire of the negro incendiaries; on the third day, however, of the pillage, and that on which the town was set on fire, I reached the ship *Jupiter*, commanded by rear-admiral *Cambias*, but the crew had mutinied, put that officer in irons, and threatened to blow up the ship if any attempt should be made to re-instate him in his command.

I was absolutely destitute of every thing; but I was less grieved at the total wreck of my fortune, than at the loss of my library, and a very valuable anatomical cabinet. These were the fruits of fifteen years labour, which I had removed in the year 1790, from Nancy to St Domingo. Numerous collections of different kinds, made during a residence of nearly thirteen years in that colony, probably were destroyed by the flames.

What still more increased the horrors of my situation, was the information I received of the supposed assassination of my wife; but the intelligence was false, for two months afterwards we mutually discovered that each other was in existence, through

\* Consult the Travels of *Bayard*, *Crevecoeur*, *Brisot*, *Liancourt*, *Weld*; Historical and Political Researches, by a Citizen of Virginia, 4 vols. 8vo. 1788, some Notes or Letters in the Britannic Library, and in the American Library, and what we have said in the Geography of the United States, forming a part of the two last French editions of that by *Guthrie*.

in 1793, our misery had attained its zenith. We were cast almost naked, destitute of every thing, on the shores of North America, not by the fury of the waves, but by the violence and barbarity of man. If, as they fled from a land of desolation, imbroed in ruin and carnage, some few were provided with feeble resources to ward off the stroke of misery, they were robbed of their last hope by merciless English corsairs: few escaped their rapacity. Even women, and infants at the breast were stripped! How dreadful was our situation! But what did we not afterwards owe to an all gracious Providence! From the horrors of civil war, we suddenly passed to a state of profound peace. After such a dreadful tempest, the bright day of hospitality and plenty arose to cheer us in the land of our allies and friends.

The inhabitants of towns and cities immediately availed themselves of every resource their benevolence could suggest to aid and console our wretched families. There you beheld different civil and religious communities, there every class of citizens male and female, hasten to the sea-shore,

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the medium of the advertisements she had published in a newspaper at New York, where she had taken refuge. Such re-iterated shocks had so powerful an effect on me, that in Virginia I was seized with a very pernicious fever, which in the end, considerably injured my health.

on board the ships, into the houses, and bring every kind of assistance to our companions in misfortune.

The maritime towns which signalized their humanity, were principally, Norfolk in Virginia, where we found the greatest affluence; Baltimore, Charlestown, Philadelphia, Wilmington, New-York, and Boston. In some, considerable subscriptions were raised for the refugees; in others, they were furnished with lodging, and provisions for six months were allowed those who had neither trade nor profession.

Penetrated with gratitude for so many acts of beneficence, some among us having been enabled to parry the shafts of ill fortune, by their talents and laudable industry, wished to establish societies which might in the same manner succour other Frenchmen, whom similar misfortunes should induce to fly from the Antilles to these shores. We think our companions and successors may say to others in the words of Queen Dido: *Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.* (*Aeneid*, Book, i. v. 628—630.)

Oh! Americans! you who have granted me an asylum, and you generous Virginians, who during five years honoured me with your confidence, accept this feeble testimony of gratitude! May your hospitable shores long maintain peace, that invaluable blessing, which you now almost alone on earth enjoy!

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#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THOMAS CLARKSON, M. A. THE INTREPID ADVOCATE OF THE ABOLITION OF NEGRO SLAVERY.**

(Continued from page 41.)

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— “ Man devotes his brother, and destroys;

And worse than all, and most to be deplo’r’d  
As human nature’s broadest, foulest blot,  
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his  
sweat  
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding  
heart  
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.